

TO: Principal Investigators Supporting The Office of Biological and Physical Research (OBPR)

FROM: Dr. Kathie L. Olsen

SUBJECT: Grants Management Process Improvement Project

BACKGROUND:

In the 1997-1998 timeframe, NASA fielded an agency-wide Grants Management Process Team (GMPT) headed by Mary Kicza, Associate Administrator for Science at Goddard Space Flight Center. The GMPT made a series of recommendations to top NASA management regarding ways to reform and improve the grants process at NASA. The team recommendations covered the process end-to-end – from research solicitation to peer review to grant award. Many of the GMPT recommendations have been implemented and we believe that we've seen some improvement in the process. However, we're very aware that end-to-end process improvement is still far short of the goals established by the GMPT.

CURRENT ACTIVITY:

We plan to make OBPR a test bed to try out new and innovative ways to improve the grants management process. To accomplish that, we are conducting an assessment of the current state of the process here at the Headquarters and at the NASA Centers which award OBPR funded grants and cooperative agreements. Donna Fortunat of the HQ Office of Procurement, who helped lead the GMPT activities in 1997 and 1998, is leading the activity for OBPR.

Our first step is to identify ongoing problems with our grant management process. After the problems have been identified and assessed, we will initiate a Pilot Program within OBPR to solve those problems and improve and streamline the process.

HOWEVER, to make meaningful change, We Need Your Help. Community input is vital to the success of this project. Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey at: http://research.hq.nasa.gov/code_u/code_u.cfm to ensure that your voice is heard.

Thanks for your help and support.

Dr. Kathie L. Olsen
Acting Associate Administrator
Office of Biological & Physical Research